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FOR THE NORTH-AMERICAN JOURNAL.

Anecdote of Voltaire.

1770. The French theatre has just lost an actor, named Paulin, who had been on the stage since the year 1742. In tragedy he played tyrants, and peasants in comedy. These two parts were joined at the theatre, which was uniting the two extremes, the oppressor and the oppressed. He made a passable peasant, but a bad tyrant: his playing was heavy and without intelligence: his voice was strong, and it was this circumstance that deceived Voltaire, who hoped to make something of him, and who said, "*Let me alone, I am bringing up a tyrant by hand, with whom you will be satisfied.*" Yet the tyrant did not answer his expectation, and Paulin remained inferiour. The part in which he hoped he would succeed, was that of Polifonte, in the tragedy of Mérope. While this tragedy was in rehearsal, Voltaire overloaded the actors with corrections, as was his practice: having passed a certain night in revising his play, he woke his servant at three o'clock in the morning, and gave him a correction to carry to Paulin. The servant represented to him, that at that unusual hour M. Paulin was asleep, and that he should not be able to get into the house. *Go,* answered Voltaire gravely, *run, tyrants never sleep.*

Account of the Abbè Trublet.

The Abbè Trublet, canon and archdeacon of St. Malo, one of the forty of the French Academy, died at St. Malo, his birth place, the 14th of December. His death makes a vacancy at the Academy, which, without doubt, will be filled by M. de St. Lambert. The Abbè Trublet was not young. He was a sworn weigher of fly's eggs in scales of spider's webs, to borrow an expression of M. de Voltaire. His pretension was to extreme subtlety, his little style was as full of art, as the dress of a coquette; but his pencil was not bold, and his diminutive manner always excited an idea of meanness and baseness. An acquaintance with his person might however influence the opinion produced by his works. His face was ignoble and displeasing, his air poor and dirty: he was a low flatterer in his manners, so that his

person was even more despised than his works. His subaltern habits attached him to the car of Fontenelle and la Motte Hordant, to whom he made himself a valet. He prided himself in knowing and narrating with precision how Fontenelle coughed and spit. He published, after the death of that illustrious man, a large Fontenelliana, which is a master-piece of insipidity; the most insignificant details are related in it with a laughable emphasis. The Abbè Trublet wished to be extremely ingenious in his expressions, and even in his disposition of commas, and semicolons; there is a prodigious expenditure of wit in his punctuation. This recals to my mind a saying of Madame Geoffrin: some person having said before her, that the Abbè Trublet was, after all, a man of wit: she was in a passion, and said, *that he was only a fool rubbed over with wit, and that indeed he had the froth of it every-where.* She pretends that men are a composition of different ingredients; that there is a little pot of wit, a little pot of imagination, a little pot of reason, and a great kettle of pure folly. Destiny takes from these pots whatever it pleases, and from the whole composes the head of a man. According to Madame Geoffrin's opinion, Destiny in making the Abbè Trublet, only drew from the great kettle; afterwards afraid of having taken too much, it opened the little pot of wit, which is always boiling, and of course throws out froth. Destiny meaning to take from this pot, only caught the froth, and daubed over the substance of pure folly of which the Abbè Trublet was made up. This tale has the air of magick and sorcery, but it has withal an excellent moral. The best work by this archdeacon, is his Essays on Literature, Philosophy and Morals, in several volumes. I read them when I was too young to give my opinion of them here; I believe however if the Abbè Trublet had confined himself to a couple of volumes of these Essays without printing any thing else, that he would have passed for a meritorious author. But he did not know when to stop, and his latter volumes are very inferiour to the former ones. He went on collecting every thing he heard said, and reduced it in the evening into paragraphs for his essays. He remarked one day, that he had hard work to compose a volume every six months; the Abbè Cannoil, who is rather sarcastick, observed, *that depends on the persons you see.* Maupertuis insisted that the Essays of the Abbè Trublet had so

great a reputation in Germany, that the post-masters refused their horses to those who had not read them. In one of the volumes of his Essays, the Abbè Trublet composed a dissertation to discover the reasons of the ennui that was caused by the perusal of the Henriad: this dissertation was the true source of the immortality of the Abbè Trublet. The author of the Henriad would not be deficient in gratitude towards the laborious essayist, and thrust him from that moment into all his lesser compositions: the portrait of the Abbè Trublet, in the *Pauvre Diable*, is a master-piece that will last as long as French literature. The Abbè Trublet had no other complaint against the verses of M. de Voltaire, than that he had treated him as a deacon when he was an archdeacon; and the patriarch answered to that; *I ask his pardon, I am wrong: I thought him one of the lesser.* The Abbè Trublet sued for twenty years to become one of the French Academy, and this perseverance contributed much to render him ridiculous. At each vacancy he came to Paris in all diligence, by the St. Malo stage, made his visits, did not obtain the place, and returned after the election.* One day Piron, who lived near Fontenelle, put his head out of the window, and saw a funeral going out of Fontenelle's; he immediately shut the window, and wrote officially to the Abbè Trublet to come and solicit the vacant place. Trublet arrived with the stage, and found Fontenelle in good health, and no vacant place: it was M. Daube, the nephew of Fontenelle, that was buried. Piron had imagined that the uncle, at the age of a hundred, must die before the nephew who was only fifty, and his client Trublet had to pay the coach fare for nothing. He came into the Academy at last without any warning, and when no one expected it. The Abbè Trublet after having obtained this object of all his wishes, experienced, what is the most fatal to man, the being without any thing to desire, and he fell into a state of indifference and languor. For upwards of five years, he had totally abandoned the theatre

* Accounts of the election of members into the French Academy abound in these memoirs. It was one of the subjects that most interested society in Paris before the revolution. A thousand intrigues were made use of for or against the candidates, sometimes rank, sometimes talent, sometimes both, and sometimes neither were the successful candidates. The person who wished to obtain a seat, made a formal visit to each of the members to solicit his vote. On his reception he delivered a discourse in which he eulogized the deceased member whose place he had taken, Louis XIV. and the Cardinal Richelieu who founded the Academy, and many others. The secretary delivered an answer. T.

of his trials and his triumph, and had retired to his own district to enjoy the consideration, which in the provinces is attached to the title of academician. On his reception at the Academy, he sent his discourse as a brother academician to M. de Voltaire; this proceeding touched the patriarch, and he made his peace with the Abbè Trublet, and this peace has been inviolably observed. From that time the Abbè Trublet was no longer stuffed into the little pamphlets of Ferney.

Anecdotes of General Clerk.

May, 1770. A letter has just been published addressed to Brigadier General Clerk, who served in the British army sent to the succour of Portugal in the last war. The author of the letter is another English officer, who was his aid de camp, and who remained in Portugal since the peace. After this event General Clerk traversed Spain, and came to Paris, where he staid a long time. He is a man of sense, but a great talker, and even fatiguing from the trick he has of adding to every phrase that he pronounces an *Hem?* so that he has the air of interrogating a person continually, though he never waits for an answer. Notwithstanding this, we like him very well, and there is only Madame Geoffrin, who must have a great variety of people and things, and who does not love to dwell long on the same object, who cannot think of General Clerk even now, without trembling all over. Baron d'Holbach brought this stranger to her, and after the first compliments, and a visit of half an hour, he rose to go away. M. Clerk, instead of following the person who had presented him, according to custom in a first visit, remained. Madame Geoffrin asked him if he went much to the theatres?—Rarely.—To the publick walks?—Very seldom.—To court, to the princes?—No one less.—How then do you pass your time? Why, when I find myself in a house that pleases me, I converse and I stay there. At these words Madame Geoffrin turned pale. It was six o'clock in the evening; she thought that General Clerk might remain till ten; this idea gave her the shuddering of a fever. By chance M. d'Alembert came in. Madame Geoffrin persuaded him after a little time, that he was not well, and that he must get General Clerk to take him home. The latter, delighted to render a service, told M. d'Alembert, that he might dispose of his

carriage as he pleased, that he should not want till the evening to take him home. These words were a thunderbolt for Madame Geoffrin, who could not get rid of our Scotchman, whatever change happened in her apartment, by the arrival and departure of visiters. At this moment she cannot think with calmness of that day; and she did not go to bed without taking precautions against the danger of a second visit. I never could persuade her, that General Clerk was a man accustomed to good society. In fact the only thing I knew against him, was that he made his horses remain from half past four, at the house where he dined, champing their bits till midnight, in the midst of winter, without ever moving from the place. But here we are, as far from our Portuguese story, as from the fortunate sepulchres of Moukden. Since it is so, it will do no harm to relate an anecdote of the celebrated David Garrick. General Clerk held a long discourse one day at table, in presence of that illustrious actor, to prove that the enthusiasm of the English for Shakespeare was only a matter of fashion; that in reality nobody either admired or understood that author; but, that Mr. Garrick, by his acting, which was so full of genius, had found the secret to make him the idol of the nation. Garrick, a great admirer of Shakespeare, and naturally full of vivacity and petulance, contained himself for a long time: at length he rose from table, took the hand of General Clerk and said to him, *I promise you, General, that through my whole life I will never venture to speak on the subject of war.* But it is time to hear the report of the aid de camp who was left in Portugal.

Letter from Lieut. Col. Shaw Groset to General Clerk.

Elvas, 5 December, 1769.

A very singular event, Sir, has happened in the vicinity. The king, as you know, was residing at Villa Viciosa, one of his hunting seats four leagues from here. Last Sunday in going out to ride according to custom, a man in a peasant's dress, with a stick in his hand, waited for him at the gate of the park, and when a part of the court had passed, he had the inconceivable audacity to raise his arm against the prince. The king turned his horse upon him and exclaimed, *Are you mad?* At this moment some of the court came to the assistance of the king; but the fellow would not suffer himself to be easily disarmed. The Count de Prado among others, received three or four severe blows

over the head: The whole retinue being now assembled, the man would have been cut to pieces, if the king had not cried out, *Do not kill him, but let him be taken to Don Louis Acunha, one of the secretaries of state.* When the man was examined, to know who he was and how he could commit such a rash action? He answered, that he was a veteran, disbanded soldier, that the king owed him eight years arrears of pay, several uniforms, and a little mule, that had been taken from him by force; that he had presented a petition to the ministry, and another to his majesty without any answer. This action will be as inconceivable to you, Sir, as it is to me. The man served formerly in a regiment of artillery that was under your orders, and has always been considered very resolute. He says he knows very well that he shall be put to death.

Anecdotes of Rousseau.

Jean Jaques Rousseau has been for some time at Lyons. He has quitted his asylum in Dauphiny, the chateau of Bourdeille, if I do not mistake. The cause is said to have been a quarrel that happened between him and the lady of the chateau; but I believe nothing positive is known about it. It is however more certain, that he has composed a comick opera in one act on the subject of *Pygmalion*, half sung, half spoken, according to the barbarous custom of the modern French opera. There is, it is said, only one actor in this play, and that is Pygmalion. The part of the statue is very short, it only speaks three times. When it perceives itself to be animated, it touches its heart, and says: *It is me.* It then approaches a neighbouring statue, and feeling it inanimate, says, *It is not me.* Placing its hand afterwards on the heart of Pygmalion, and finding that it palpitates, it exclaims, *It is another me.* This is perhaps a little confused, a little metaphysical; *me* is a very abstract term for a first thought, or rather a first sentiment. Whatever exists, refers every thing to its existence, by an immutable and necessary law, without knowing it. To discover this now common truth, a long course of observation, and a long exercise of our intellectual faculties, was necessary. How could a metamorphosed statue find, in the first instant, so complicated a result, and which supposes so many combinations, and understood relations? The first words of a being suddenly animated would doubtless be some pas-

sionate, impetuous, mournful expression: the aspect of the universe would agitate it; it would think that it was menaced, its own energy would excite fear. This is the route to discover what would be the first words of a statue; yet however true these observations may be, I am convinced that the three speeches of M. Rousseau's statue, will make its fortune with the publick, which is in the habit of applauding things infinitely more false. What seems to me a defect in the plan, is treating it in the ambiguous form of our modern operas, where the words are sung and spoken alternatively. A piece in which a miracle is operated, should be the most distant imitation possible of common life.

It is said that M. Rousseau had thought of forming another piece, founded on a very tragick event, that has lately happened at Lyons, though he has since given up the intention. A young man, an Italian by birth, a fencing master by profession, and a young girl, the daughter of a rich innkeeper, had conceived for each other the most violent passion. The parents having refused their consent to their marriage, and assured them, that it never should take place, the young people after recovering from their first grief, swore eternal fidelity to each other: and to render their oath independent of events, they on a day agreed upon, dressed themselves as victims, went to a chapel in the country near the city, and there closely embracing, and kneeling before the altar, each with a pistol killed themselves. The story says, they were besides armed with two poniards in case the pistols had not killed them instantly, but that this precaution was superfluous. Letters from respectable people at Lyons, confirm all the details of this remarkable occurrence.

Death of M. Chatelmont.

A scelerat, escaped from the galleys, and who had committed several assassinations in the streets of Paris, in the course of a few days, has just expiated his crimes on the wheel. One of those who had the misfortune to be attacked by him, was M. Perinet de Chatelmont, who has since died of his wound, after having languished a month. He was the youngest of a numerous protestant family, well known in financial affairs. I knew his uncle, a farmer-general, a man of sense, who died seven or eight years ago, upwards of

ninety. He had passed his youth as was the custom of the times, with the fashionable wits in the coffee-houses of Paris, and mention is made of him in the famous couplets of Jean Baptiste Rousseau, which occasioned a criminal process. The elder Perinet was cited, as being attached to the protestant faith. When I knew him, he had been for a long time neutral; he possessed many millions, with much simplicity of manners, and great subtlety of mind. His grand daughters have carried their wealth into two families of condition, by marrying one a Langerou, the other a Brienne. His collaterals, who enjoy a handsome fortune, neutral like their uncle, have conformed as to the exteriour to the prevailing religion, excepting this poor Chatelmont, who was assassinated, and who continued a zealous protestant. His brothers spend their fortune in a manner suitable to respectable citizens. Chatelmont used his like a holy man who is here only on his passage, and is returning to his true country. He did not indulge himself with a carriage; he only allowed himself the simplest necessaries, and employed all the rest of his fortune in works of charity; he had a vast number of pensioners who lose every thing by his death. I have made mention of him here, on account of what he said to the murderer, whom he was obliged to suffer to be brought to his bedside to be confronted with him. The villain attributed his crime to the want in which he found himself: *Wretched man!* exclaimed Chatelmont to his murderer, *why did you not find me out? I would have given you a monthly stipend.**

Young's Night Thoughts.

The first Night of Young, translated into French verse, by M. Colardeau, 8vo. pamphlet of 30 pages. In this production, a very great talent for versification may be recognised, of which the author had already given proofs in other works. Of all our young poets, M. de la Harpe, and M. Colardeau are the only ones who have any idea of harmony, of that sweet versification, that insensibly disposes the soul to a mild and tender melancholy, of that imitative poetry, which by some secret charm, establishes a connexion between a peculiar sensation of the soul, and a particular choice of words or arrangement of sounds.

Manes chers et sacrés! &c. &c.

* This anecdote needs no observation; it is impossible not to remark, that this speech is the true sublimity of religion and charity. T.

These are certainly verses: and if M. Colardeau and his comrades add to the talent, which they have received from nature, the study and application necessary to every man who would excel in his art, we shall be without doubt indebted to them for very estimable productions. *Young's Night Thoughts* have a great reputation in England, and even in Europe. It is said, a German translation exists, which is a master-piece, but I have not seen it. A certain M. le Tourney gave us a French translation last year. M. Colardeau, from civility to his rival no doubt, pretends that this version had a most brilliant success. Let me perish, if I ever heard it spoken of by any person whatever. This style cannot succeed in France; we are not abstracted enough, not solitary enough; we cannot give it the time that is necessary for it to affect us. A more real reproach which I make against this work, is the vagueness which it throws about the reader. There may be remarked in Young and writers of his class, a heated mind, an extravagant, wild imagination, rather than a deeply affected heart; it is difficult to say exactly what he complains of, what are his misfortunes; the objects of his grief are unknown, though he recals them unceasingly. There is in all his writings too many bells, too many tombs, too many funeral songs and cries, too many phantoms; the simple and natural expression of true grief would produce a hundred times more effect than all these figures: the object is to make my tears flow, and not to frighten me like a child, by all these images that are terrible and imposing in appearance, but which merely graze the soul and leave no lasting sentiment.

Peculiarity of the French language.

The Chevalier de Boufflers, while at the seminary of St. Sulpice, to prepare himself for a bishoprick, which he afterwards renounced for the cross of Malta, made the following rebus which is worth preserving.

L. n. n. e. o. p. y. l. i. a. t. t. l. i. a. m. e. l. i. a. e. t. m. e. l. i. a. r. i. t. l. i. a. v. q. l. i. e. d. c. d. a. g. a. c. k. c.

He asserted that in pronouncing these letters, in the order he had written them, they would give distinctly the following words.

'*Hélène est née au pays grec; elle y a têté; elle y a 'aimé; elle y a été aimée; elle y a heritê; elle y a vécu; 'elle y est décédée agée, assez cassée.*'

This piece of pleasantry is worth preserving, because it proves one thing that the author did not think of, the cacophony of the French language. I defy any person to produce a similar specimen in Italian: it is therefore much more difficult to be harmonious, elegant, graceful; in one word, a seductive writer in French, than in any other language; and the Héléne of the Chevalier de Boufflers may teach us the value we ought to attach to a Voltaire.

Rouelle the Chemist.

August, 1770. We have just lost the father of chemistry in France. Guillaume Francois Rouelle, apothecary, demonstrator of chemistry at the royal garden (garden of plants) of the academies of the sciences at Paris and Stockholm, died the beginning of this month, after a long and painful malady. Rouelle was a man of genius without cultivation; before his time nothing was known in France but the principles of Lémery: it was he who introduced the chemistry of Stahl, and made known that science which no one thought about here, and which a number of great men had carried in Germany to a high degree of perfection.* Rouelle did not know how to read them all, but his instinct was ordinarily as great as their science. He ought then to be considered the founder of chemistry in France; and yet his name will be forgotten because he has never written any thing, and because those in our time who have written valuable works on this science, and who all came out of his school, have never rendered that homage to their master, which they owed him: they have thought it more expedient to place to the credit of their own sagacity, the principles and discoveries that they derived from him; Rouelle therefore quarrelled with all of his disciples who wrote upon chemistry. He revenged himself for their ingratitude by the insults with which he loaded them in his publick and private lectures; and it was known beforehand, that in such a lecture, there would be a portrait of Malouin, in another the portrait of Macquer, finely drawn. They were, according to him, ignoramuses, barbers, journeymen, *plagiarists*. This last term in his mind had become so odious, that he applied it to the greatest criminals; and to express, for instance, the horrour he felt for Damien, he

* What was chemistry at this time either in France or Germany? T.

said he was a *plagiarist.* Indignation against the plagiarisms he had suffered, degenerated into a mania; he always thought he was pillaged; and when the works of Pott or Lehmann, or any other great German chemist were translated, and he found ideas analogous to his own, he pretended that he had been robbed by those persons. Rouelle was extremely petulant; his ideas were confused and without clearness; and a strong mind was necessary to follow him, and introduce order and perspicuity into his lessons. He did not know how to write; he spoke with the greatest vehemence, but without correctness or distinctness, and he had the habit of saying, that he was not of the academy of fine talking. With all these defects, his views were those of a man of genius, and always profound; but he sought to keep them from the knowledge of his hearers, as much as his petulant nature would permit. He commonly explained his ideas at length, and when he had said every thing, he added, *but this is one of my arcana, which I tell to no person.* Sometimes one of his scholars would get up and whisper in his ear, what he had just been saying aloud: Rouelle then believed that his scholar had discovered his *arcanum* by his own sagacity, and begged him not to divulge what he had just been saying to two hundred people. He had such a strong habit of absence, that exteriour objects no longer affected him. He tossed about like a madman in his chair while discoursing, turned himself over, thumped himself, kicked his neighbour, and tore his ruffles, without knowing any thing that he was doing. One day being in a circle where there were several ladies, he untied his garter, drew his stocking down to his shoe, scratched his leg with both hands, and then replaced the stocking and garter, and continued the conversation without having the least suspicion of what he had been doing. In his course he was commonly aided by his brother and nephew, to make the experiments before the audience. These assistants were not always to be found; Rouelle would cry out, *Nephew! Eternal Nephew!* and the eternal nephew not coming, he went himself into the back rooms of his laboratory, to seek for the objects he wanted. During this operation he always continued the lesson as if he was in presence of the audience, and at his return, he had commonly finished the demonstration he had commenced, and re-entered, saying, *Yes, gentlemen;* when they would request

him to recommence. One day being abandoned by his brother and his nephew, and making an experiment which was necessary to his lesson, he said to his hearers: *You see, gentlemen, this kettle on the fire? Well, if I was to stop stirring it one instant, an explosion would follow that would blow us all into the air.* In saying these words he forgot to stir it, and his prediction was accomplished: the explosion took place with the most horrible noise, broke all the windows of the laboratory, and in a moment the two hundred auditors found themselves scattered in the garden: fortunately no one was wounded, because the force of the explosion went up the chimney: the demonstrator escaped with the loss of this chimney and his wig. It is truly wonderful that Rouelle, who almost always made his experiments by himself, because he wished to conceal his *arcana* from his brother, who is very skilful, has not been blown into the air by his continual carelessness; but from constantly inhaling without any precaution the most pernicious exhalations, he lost the use of his limbs, and passed the latter years of his life in the most terrible sufferings. Rouelle was an honest man, but with a character so unhewn, that he neither understood nor observed the established customs of society; and as it was easy to prejudice him against any one, and impossible to cure him of this prejudice, he often lacerated others without rhyme or reason; so that it is quite natural that he should have many enemies. He could not esteem the physicks, nor the systems of M. de Buffon: he was not affected by *his fine talking*, and some lessons of his course were always employed to decry this illustrious academician. He had taken a dislike to Doctor Bordeu, a physician of excellent sense. *Yes, gentlemen*, said he every year at a certain part of his lecture, *it is one of our people, a plagiarist, who has killed my brother, whom you see here.* He meant, that Bordeu had treated his brother improperly in a disorder. Rouelle was a demonstrator in the publick lessons at the royal garden, Doctor Bourdelin was professor, and generally finished his lessons by these words; *As Monsieur, the demonstrator, is going to prove by his experiments.* Rouelle then taking his turn to speak, instead of making his experiments, *Gentlemen, every thing that the professor has told you is false and absurd, as I am going to prove.* Unfortu-

nately for the professor he often kept his word. He was a good Frenchman, full of zeal and patriotism, but a grumbler, fond of news when his attention was not fixed on his crucible. At the commencement of the last war, he wanted to command the flat-bottomed boats to go and burn London. He did not despair of finding the means of setting fire to the English fleet under water, it was one of his *arcana*. I met him the day after the battle of Rosbach: he was limping, and walked with difficulty: *Good heavens! what has happened to you, M. Rouelle?* said I. *I am ground to powder,* answered he, *I am done up; the whole Prussian cavalry has marched this night over my body.* He then called our generals *plagiarists,* and I perceived this was not the moment to make him change his opinion. Great military and political events sometimes affected him so much, that he would discuss them in the midst of his lecture on chemistry. He counted among his disciples, not only all the skilful chemists that France now possesses, but many other celebrated men of different classes; he had independently of his excellent principles in chemistry, the secret of all men of genius; that of making you think. Doctor Roux, one of his scholars, has proposed to collect his papers and publish them, without which many of his *arcana* will perish with him.

Anecdote of the Empress Catharine.

A Russian poet, named Sumarakoff, author of several tragedies, being at Moscow, had a quarrel with the first actress on the theatre of that capital; these accidents happen at Moscow, as well as at Paris. On a certain day, the governour of Moscow ordered one of the poet's plays to be performed; he opposed it, because this actress played the principal part. This reason not appearing sufficient to make the governour change his opinion, the poet lost himself to such a degree, that when the curtain rose, he jumped on the stage, seized the actress who appeared with all the tragick paraphernalia, and threw her into the side scenes. After having thus interrupted the publick tranquillity, he thought he had not done enough, and in his poetick phrensy wrote two letters to the empress herself, with as much indiscretion as rashness, filled with complaints and invectives against an actress. I defy any French poet to do better.

Novelist Marmontel, what do you think would be the consequence of this inexcusable insult?—But it is easy to tell. The impertinent letters of the poet Sumarakoff did not reach the empress ; the minister charged with the poetical department read them, and gave directions to throw the poet into a dungeon, till further orders, where he probably now remains.

Away with the romance and the historical romancer, he is only a cold and stupid liar. Such terminations are only proper in countries that boast of the mildness and politeness of their manners ; the police is not so perfect in Russia. Her Imperial Majesty received the two letters by the post, and after having given her orders for the Archipelago, for Moldavia, the Crimea, Georgia, and the borders of the Black Sea, she had still time to write the following answer: 'Monsieur Sumarakoff, I have been very much astonished 'at your letter of the 28th of January, and still more at 'that of the 1st of February. Both of them contain com-'plaints against the Belmontia, who, it seems to me notwith-'standing, has only obeyed the orders of Count Soltikoff. 'The Field Marshal desired to see your tragedy perform-'ed ; that did you honour. It was proper for you, to con-'form to the wishes of the first person in authority at Mos-'cow : and if he chose that the piece should be played, his 'will should not have been contested. I believe you know 'as well as any one, how much respect is merited by those 'men, who have served with glory, and whose heads are 'covered with gray hairs. It is for this reason, I advise 'you to avoid such disputes for the future. You will then 'preserve that tranquillity of mind, necessary for your 'works, and it will always be more agreeable to me to see 'the passions represented in your dramas, than to read 'them in your letters. I am yours affectionately,

(Signed) 'CATHARINE.'

I advise all ministers, who have the department of *lettres de cachet*, to enregister this form in their records, and never on any account to deliver any other to poets, and all who have a right to be of the irritable class, that is to say, childish and mad by profession. After this letter, which perhaps deserves immortality as much as the monuments of the wisdom and glory of the present reign in Russia, I am afraid that I shall be confirmed in the heretical opinion, that sense is never injurious, even on the throne.

Cure for a consumption.

I will not answer for the efficacy of the receipt which you will find indicated in the following recital; but if my remedy serves no one, at least it can do no harm. Read it, and make use of it, if you are in want of it, if you have faith in it, or if you have bottles to cork.

An officer in garrison at Rochefort, worn out with trying all the remedies prescribed, to cure him of an obstinate cough, ceased using them, and resumed his common mode of living. He soon began to raise blood, and his breast appeared affected, he still persisted in doing nothing for it. One day having had a cask of wine drawn off, he had half a pound of rosin, and half a pound of yellow wax brought into his room, which he melted in an earthen vase over a chafing-dish, to seal his bottles. This operation having taken up about an hour and a half, he thought at the end of that time, that he expectorated with more ease, and that his cough was less dry, and less frequent He thought that the fumigation which he had by accident received, might have contributed to it; in consequence he recommenced it, keeping his doors and windows shut, and walking amidst the cloud of smoke, that arose from the mixture. At the end of four or five days he found himself perfectly cured. He mentioned his discovery to the surgeon of his regiment, who, without believing its virtue, tried it upon a soldier who was dying in the hospital of a most decided pulmonary complaint. After having had him taken to his house, he made him undergo every four hours a fumigation, proportioning the quantity of smoke to the strength of the patient, who as he was very weak might have been suffocated, if the smoke had been too strong. After the second day the sick man's cough assumed a milder character, and in six weeks he was perfectly re-established.

And now upon this, as Rabelais says, "amuse yourself and drink cool."

Translation of Savage's Life.

The Life of Savage, an English poet, has just been translated into French, by M. le Tourneur, the same who translated Young's Night Thoughts, a poem of the finest black, that it is possible to imagine, and which the translator has found the means to get read by a people whose thoughts are

rose-coloured. It is true that this complexion begins to fade. M. le Tourneur understands English well, and writes French with harmony and purity. This biography of Savage is interesting; it is the delineation of an unfortunate man, of an inconsistent character, of an impetuous genius; of an individual sometimes benevolent, at others malevolent; at one moment haughty, at another mean; half true, half false; in every thing more deserving of compassion, than hatred, of contempt than applause; agreeable to hear, dangerous to frequent; the best lesson that we can have on the inconvenience of the acquaintance of poets, their want of morality and of propriety. The work would have been delightful, and to be compared with the memoirs of the Count de Grammont, if the English author had intended to have composed a satire on his hero; but unhappily he is in earnest.*

The account of the life of the wretched Savage, son of Anne, countess of Macclesfield, who to get a separation from her husband, avowed herself to be with child by Lord Rivers, is interrupted by extracts from the different works of Savage, and most of them very fine. This countess of Macclesfield was a strange woman, who persecuted an offspring of love, with a rage that was sustained for many years, that was never extinguished, and that is founded on nothing. If a poet had thought proper to introduce into a drama or a romance, a character of this kind, he would have been hissed, and yet it is in nature. Nature then is sometimes hissed, and why not? does she not merit it?

The life of Savage is followed by that of Thomson, author of the seasons, and of some tragedies. Nothing is to be said of him, except that he is the very contrary of the other; his biography is tiresome. It is necessary for the happiness of those who have to deal with men, that they should resemble Thomson; for the interest and amusement of a reader, that they should be like Savage. I will only say one word of the *Seasons of Thomson* compared to the *Georgicks of Virgil;* the muse of Thomson is like our lady of Loretto, and the muse of Virgil a Venus: one is rich and covered with diamonds, the other is beautiful, naked, and with only a simple bracelet. Virgil is a model of good taste; Thomson is well calculated to corrupt that of young writers.

* It would have been amusing to have heard Dr. Johnson's reply to this criticism of Baron Grimm. T.

Sir W. Jones' letter to Perron.

January, 1772. M. Anquetil du Perron, of the royal academy of inscriptions and belles lettres, published, about six months since, his travels in India, with a translation of the Zend-Avesta, and the sacred books of the Guebres attributed to Zoroaster. This trash formed three enormous volumes in quarto, that cannot be either sold or read. The publick had conceived a favourable opinion of this work, which had been announced and expected for a long time. It was known that the author had passed many years in India, without any other design than that of learning the ancient Persian among the Guebres, in order to be able to translate their sacred books, and to bring us exact notions of their religious principles, their tenets, and the worship of the adorers of fire. It is known that the Guebres have the exclusive privilege of being persecuted by the Mahometans, who with this exception, tolerate all religions easily enough. Exterminated in Persia, they have taken refuge in Hindostan, where the reigning religion obliges them to be extremely circumspect. They are then naturally mysterious, concealed, and suspicious towards strangers. M. Anquetil was not sorry on his return to France, to assure us, that he had surmounted all the obstacles that were opposed to the object of his voyage, as well as an infinity of physical dangers. And when he was told that he had probably made himself a Guebre to succeed in his design, he gave a significant smile, and shewed a certain air of satisfaction at being suspected of this apostasy. At length, after many years waiting, the publick had an opportunity of judging of the extent of its obligations to M. Anquetil. It has been decided, that if these were the original books of Zoroaster, this legislator of the ancient Persians was a most signal dotard, who mixed up a heap of absurd and superstitious opinions, with a little of that common morality, which may be found in all the laws upon earth.

It is evident that it was risking his life very uselessly, and very laboriously, to go to the extremity of the globe to seek for such a collection of nonsense. It was not worth going so far after folly, for all nations have a sufficient fund of it. But this is not the only fault of M. Anquetil. If you have the patience to examine his work, you will find in it throughout that character of frivolity, that discovers a traveller to be full of narrow prejudices, of presumption and

vanity, to whom you can neither grant esteem nor confidence. He is a second Abbè Chappe. The one talks to you about his furs, his picturesque attire, his halts in the midst of mountains, the balls and fêtes given him by the ladies of Siberia. The other gives you narrations full as interesting to inform you that he sat out with a complexion of lilies and roses, and that he was every-where taken for the Adonis of France. If our travellers and our writers continue in this noble strain, it will not be said that we have never left our childhood, but that we have fallen back into it.

An Englishman, M. Jones, has given, in a French letter, a fraternal correction to M. Anquetil du Perron, in which is comprised an examination of his translation of the books attributed to Zoroaster.

After having very properly animadverted on some of the impertinences of M. Anquetil, on the subject of England, M. Jones dwells on the folly of a man who loves his life, and exposes his florid complexion to learn what nobody understands, and which it is neither useful nor agreeable to be acquainted with. He proves often and clearly, that M. Anquetil, with all his solemn pride, founded on his believing himself to be the only man in Europe acquainted with the ancient language of the Persians, may be strongly suspected of having only very common and very confused notions about it. This pamphlet is, in general, that of a learned and enlightened man, and one of excellent sense. With some slight corrections, and rather effacing than adding, one could make a work of this pamphlet, that M. de Voltaire might avow.* It may be perceived that M. Jones has studied this illustrious writer; it may also be seen that he is one of those foreigners who is not fascinated with French musick. They have done the Abbè Chappe the honour to refute him in Russia, in a pamphlet entitled *Antidote*. Some attribute this work to the celebrated Princess Daschkoff, others to M. Falconet, a French sculptor who is erecting the statue of Peter the Great, at St. Petersburgh. In this antidote there is too much abuse; but the letter of M. Jones is a model of the manner in which those rash travellers should be treated, who only make the tour of the world, to acquire the right of talking nonsense.

* Grimm here renders great justice to this celebrated letter of Sir Wm. Jones, when it is considered the exalted opinion entertained of Voltaire, then at the heighth of his fame; while the former was a young man, whose great talents were yet but imperfectly known. T